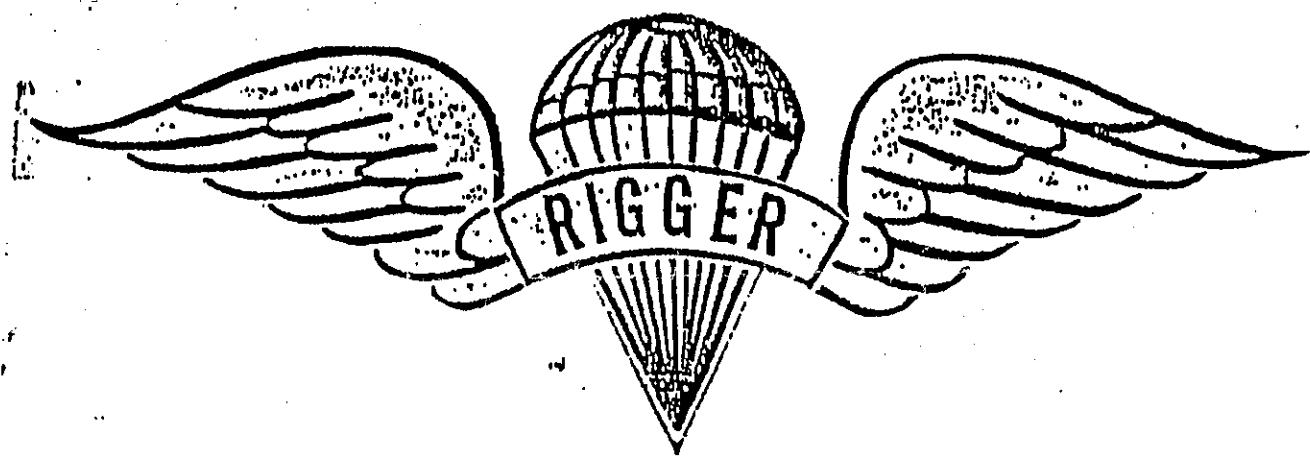


RIGGER BADGE (WING)



## HISTORY OF THE PARACHUTE RIGGER BADGE

CONCEPT AND EARLY DESIGN OF THE PARACHUTE RIGGER BADGE ORIGINATED IN THE 11TH PARACHUTE MAINTENANCE COMPANY, 11TH AIRBORNE DIVISION, WHILE THE DIVISION WAS STATION AT CAMP SCHIMMELFENNING, SENDAI, JAPAN 1948.

THE DIVISION PARACHUTE MAINTENANCE OFFICER WAS MAJOR THOMAS R. CROSS, THE PRIMARY ARCHITECT FOR THE BADGE. HE WAS ASSISTED BY SFC EWING WHO WORKED IN THE PARACHUTE MAINTENANCE SECTION.

THE FIRST DESIGN EFFORT CONSISTED OF A CLOTH BADGE, TO BE WORN ON THE RIGHT SLEEVE OF THE FIELD JACKET, WHICH DEPICTED A FULL PARACHUTE CANOPY WITH A HALF WING EXTENDING FROM THE RIGHT SIDE. THIS DESIGN EFFORT LOOKED VERY SIMILAR TO THE PATHFINDERS BADGE SO MAJOR CROSS SUSPENDED DESIGN EFFORTS UNTIL THE 11TH AIRBORNE DIVISION COMPLETED IT'S MOVE FROM JAPAN, TO CAMP CAMPBELL, KY IN 1949. AFTER THE 11TH PARACHUTE MAINTENANCE COMPANY BECAME SETTLED IN IT'S HOME AT 52D AND AND INDIANA AVENUE ON CAMP CAMPBELL IN 1949, MAJOR CROSS AND SFC EWING DESIGNED ANOTHER PARACHUTE RIGGER BADGE. THE BADGE WAS TAKEN FROM A WHITE SILK SCARF WHICH WAS DONATED TO THE RIGGER MUSEUM BY COL THOMAS R. CROSS (RETIRED). THE BADGE WAS DESIGNED TO BE WORN ON THE FIELD JACKET AND ON THE RED BASEBALL CAP WHICH WAS ADOPTED BY THE 11TH PARACHUTE MAINTENANCE COMPANY IN LATE 1949 OR EARLY 1950, DURING

APRIL - MAY 1950 (EXERCISE SWARMER) THE 11TH PARACHUTE MAINTENANCE COMPANY (RIGGERS) WERE WEARING THE RED CAP ON DROP ZONES, STAGING AND LOADING AREAS.

COL CROSS STATED, "THE PURPOSE OF THE RIGGER WINGS WAS TO PROMOTE ESPIRIT DE CORPS AMONG THE MEMBERS OF THE 11TH PARACHUTE MAINTENANCE COMPANY AND THE RED CAP WAS USED TO IDENTIFY RIGGER PERSONNEL AT CRITICAL LOCATIONS SUCH AS LOADING AREAS AND DROP ZONES."

COL CROSS INDICATED THAT THE RIGGER WINGS AND RED CAPS WAS WELL RECEIVED BY THE OTHER DIVISIONAL UNITS. THE CONCEPT OF USING A SPECIAL BADGE SPREAD QUICKLY THROUGHOUT THE ARMY. SUPPLY BY SKY WHICH OUTLINES THE QUARTERMASTER AIRBORNE DEPLOYMENT FROM 1950-1953 HAS SEVERAL PHOTOGRAPHS OF RIGGERS IN OVERSEAS ASSIGNMENTS WEARING THE BADGE.

OVER THE YEARS THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL ATTEMPTS TO GAIN FORMAL RECOGNITION FOR THE PARACHUTE RIGGER BADGE WHICH HAS BECOME UNIVERSALLY WORN AND EXCEPTED BY THE U. S. ARMY. UNFORTUNATELY THESE ATTEMPTS TO LEGITIMIZE THE WEARING OF THE RIGGER BADGE WAS DISAPPROVED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY.

IN EARLY 1983 MR. JAMES S. EMERY, MILITARY ANALYST, AIRBORNE DEPARTMENT, QUARTERMASTER SCHOOL, FORT LEE, VIRGINIA INITIATED ANOTHER FORMAL ATTEMPT TO GAIN RECOGNITION FOR THE RIGGER BADGE. EVEN THOUGH

THIS EFFORT GENERATED UNPRECEDENTED SUPPORT FROM GENERAL OFFICERS IN THE FIELD, IT WAS SUBSEQUENTLY DISAPPROVED BY GENERAL WICKHAM, CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE ARMY, 9 OCT 1983. THE DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF LOGISTICS OF THE ARMY, LTG THOMPSON WAS A STAUNCH SUPPORTER OF THE 1983 EFFORT.

ON 13 FEB 1986, THE QUARTERMASTER SCHOOL PRESENTED A SERIES OF BRIEFINGS TO GENERAL THOMPSON, THEN COMMANDING ARMY MATERIAL COMMAND. MR. EMERY WAS ONE OF THE BRIEFERS AND THANKED GENERAL THOMPSON FOR HIS 1983 EFFORTS AND EXPLAINED HOW DISAPPOINTED THE RIGGER FIELD WAS UPON HEARING THE DECISION. AFTER FURTHER DISCUSSION GENERAL THOMPSON INDICATED HE WAS WILLING TO REOPEN THE ISSUE WITH GENERAL WICKHAM.

ON 19 MARCH 1986, GENERAL THOMPSON SENT A MEMORANDUM TO GENERAL WICKHAM ASKING THAT HE RECONSIDER HIS 1983 DECISION.

AFTER REQUESTING SOME FIELD COMMENTS, GENERAL WICKHAM APPROVED THE PARACHUTE RIGGER BADGE ON 9 JUNE 1986.

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCED APPROVAL OF THE RIGGER BADGE BY MESSAGE ON 12 JUNE 1986.